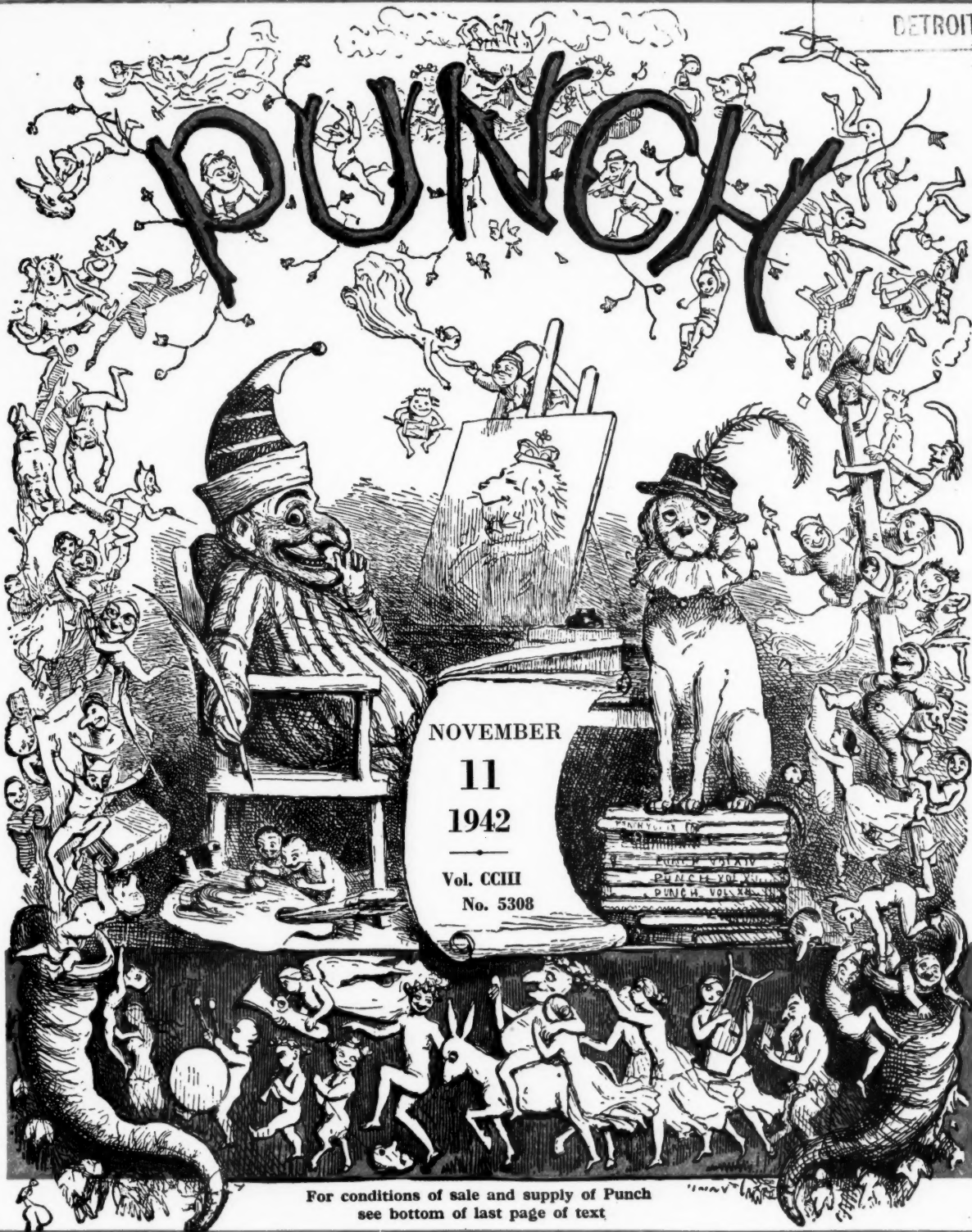


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NOVEMBER

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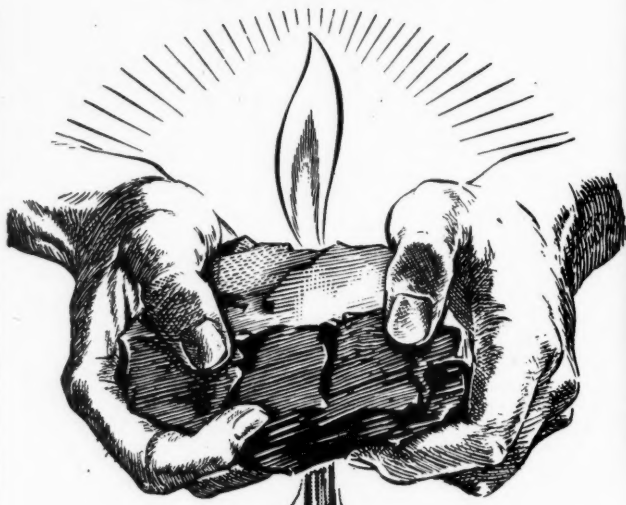
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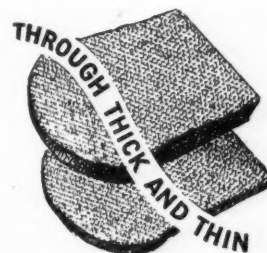
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C3129

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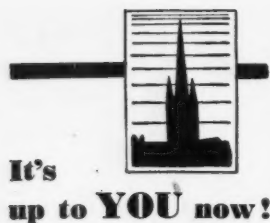


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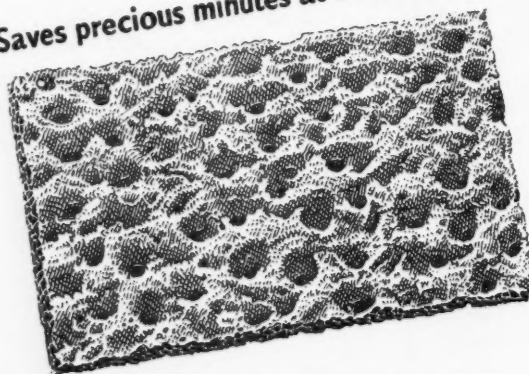
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P.S. Please make use of our Renovation and Repair Service and be as helpful as you can by returning empty Sparklets Bulbs to your supplier—Allowance: "C" size 4d. dozen; "B" size 2d. dozen.

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NERVE-TONIC FOOD

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*made specially
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10 for 1/-

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The Priceless Biscuit

It is an odd reflection that, if the 'points' be lacking, not all the wealth of Ophir will suffice to purchase a single Romary Biscuit. And in a topsy-turvy world, where the cost of excellence in the new currency of 'points' is no more than that of mediocrity, the best becomes more than ever desirable.

We, no less than you, regret that in some parts of the country wartime necessity makes it impossible for you to buy Romary Biscuits. To those more fortunately placed, we would say: Romary Biscuits are still the supreme example of the art of biscuit craftsmanship and today the need for 'points' lays an additional emphasis upon quality.

ROMARY'S 'Tunbridge Wells' Biscuits

(Registered Trade Mark)

Burlingtons are the perfect alternative to imported Havanas.

Guaranteed made and rolled from the finest imported Havana and other world famous cigar leaf.

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Half Coronas 1/- Coronas 1/8 Petit Coronas 1/4

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meticulous workmanship
with the finest, warmest
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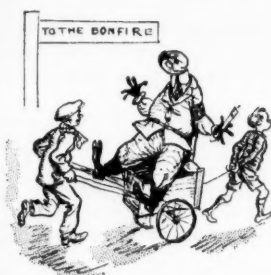


Working harder and as well as ever yet built and bought in 1937! This is the history of Ekco sets, which you will find in many homes. Ekco radio has an unrivalled reputation for long life, with sparkling, high-quality performance. When this war is won and domestic radios are again available, Ekco will be in the forefront of the industry.

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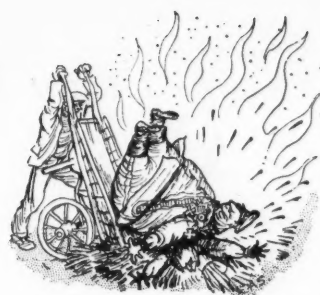
When you must light up—use Ekco Lamps

E. K. COLE, LTD., EKCO WORKS, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA



PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCIII No. 5308

November 11 1942

Charivaria

WE see it stated that with reasonable care coats made of rabbit-skins will give years of wear. That is why rabbits wear them.

"A bathroom should be well-ventilated," says a writer. Otherwise, how can the cold bath member of a suspicious household get rid of the steam?

A doctor states that the best ten years of a man's life are between thirty and forty. And a woman's, between twenty-eight and thirty.

An American officer says he doesn't think much of our London fogs. We can't see much in them ourselves.



"Goldfish sometimes fight," says a naturalist. This is what the military experts call a global war.

"The cuckoo leaves the sunny forests of Africa for our shores once a year," says a nature writer. The cuckoo!

A circus proprietor explains that the way to enter a lions' cage is to pretend you are not afraid. We couldn't be so deceitful.

An old music-hall patron recalls a Victorian ventriloquist who had a voluminous moustache. A modern audience would regard this as cheating.



An M.P. is a part-time Civil Defence worker. Well, that's something.

Dr. LEY says the German law doesn't punish the innocent. Probably because of the difficulty of finding any.

It appears that Herr HITLER's half-brother used to work as a butcher. Well, doesn't his half-brother?

"I have strong objections to keeping a motor car in the same barn with oats," confesses a farmer. It goes against the grain.

"Although not yet six months old, my child can talk already," boasts a proud mother. We presume it is a girl.

Another good way to prevent rings on the piano-lid is to stand the cocktail-glasses on the wireless cabinet instead.

A Socialist predicts that unemployment will be rife after the war. The old dole story.

"Following apologies for absence, the Hon. Secretary read a telegram from the late Miss M——. Miss B—— suggested that a telegram from the meeting should be sent to Miss M—— conveying affectionate thoughts and best wishes. This was done at once."—*Local Magazine*.

But how?

Cupboard Love
"WIFE HOARDER FINED £150"
Daily Herald.

"Sufferers from rheumatism are apt to become self-centred and unsociable," states a nurse. They are certainly inclined to be a bit stiff.

"Crawling on the hands and knees is excellent exercise," says a doctor, "strengthening the stomach and back muscles." And sometimes—*sometimes*—it is the way to obtain an overdraft.



The Hunger of Hitler

A SORT of song has come to me,
And glad I am that I should be
The chosen chap to harp it,
Of how (with all his Generals round)
Herr Hitler lay upon the ground
Biting a Turkey carpet.

"Am I in Stalingrad or not?
And where is Rommel, oh *mein Gott!*
This army, who shall lead it?
The time-table is upside-down
I have to stand upon my crown"
(Meaning his head) "to read it."

"You are dismissed and *you and you*,"
And here he paused to take a chew
And choked for half a minute;
"Get me another General Staff
That would not make a scarecrow laugh
And has some stuffing in it."

So all the Generals went away
And one retired upon half-pay
And new ones were selected
(This happens every other week)
And only Halder stayed to speak
Before he was ejected.

And Halder said "The news is bad
From Egypt and from Stalingrad—
There is no way to sweeten it—
But don't suppose because of that
That you can put me on the mat,
Mein Fuehrer . . . You have eaten it."

EVOE

Gremlins, Aircrews, for the Use of

THE growing habit of gremlins accompanying aircrews on operational sorties is causing Air Ministry officials considerable concern. Only the other day two D.F.C.s were announced without citation and the public wondered. Not so the Air Force personnel—they knew: these pilots had obviously killed a couple of gremlins with their bare hands.

The standard gremlin stands about twenty inches high and weighs some seventeen pounds in still air. In appearance it is rather like a North American jack-rabbit with which has been crossed a bull-terrier or something. Whatever the strain, the significant point is that it has definitely been crossed, this permanently affecting its temperament. I have never seen a North American jack-rabbit, but they differ from those of the south. The southern type are warmer and consequently multiply more quickly. Gremlins invariably have large ears which are usually covered

in a rudimentary growth of hair, the facial expression being reminiscent of that of an A.C.2 who has just been advised that his forty-eight-hour pass has been cancelled.

Though small in stature the gremlin's store of energy is unlimited: witness the case of the Sunderland which was bodily inverted while on patrol in the Bay of Biscay. All gremlins are greatly learned on every known principle of aerodynamics. It is your gremlin that locks your rudder-bar in a spin, or who pushes your mixture control forward during take-off.

Gremlins are found literally everywhere. Every aircraft that comes off the mass-production lines will automatically acquire one or more gremlins. Distinct traces of a whole colony of them were once found in a Link trainer at an elementary flying training school. Incidentally, philologists are undecided as to a suitable collective noun to describe a plurality of gremlins, opinion being fairly evenly divided between "cult" and "stick."

Some of my readers will be new to gremlins and would like to know how or where to see one. The easiest way to catch them off guard is in the reflector-sight of a Browning just as the gun stops, but this is not advised, as once a gremlin knows that you have seen it, it will feel that it has put a black up (gremlinally speaking) and it will get you. It may take time, but it will get you.

The problem of ridding an aircraft of gremlins without resorting to black magic is virtually insurmountable, especially as a plurality of gremlins fast becomes a vicious circle turning out mature gremlins literally in thousands.

A good way is to try formation-flying in thick cumulus, but the question arises "Is it worth it?" A Hurricane once crashed from eleven thousand feet and the plane's gremlin was scarcely shaken. There was snow on the ground at the time and it clearly showed tiny cloven-hoof marks leading to a wood close by. This gremlin was never seen again but a train was derailed at that spot next day.

Quite a fair percentage of gremlins are equipped with short sharp tridents, though supply priorities have caused some of the later kind to be tridentless. These tridentless types have no trident. One particular gremlin complete with trident used this instrument to stab the bat officer on a famous aircraft-carrier, causing that unfortunate individual to bat a Fulmar into the "island." Then, in sight of the entire ship's company, it laughed like a drain on the after lift. A cook fell overboard trying to catch it.

In conclusion, a word on the navigator's gremlin. If possible this genus strikes a new high in diabolism. It is a mover of mountains, islands, aircraft-carriers, squadron salvage—nothing is beyond it. Under extreme conditions it will reshuffle all the stars in the heavens. Just before your wireless packs up you will hear a fiendish and chilling static howl, and you will be advised to examine all control-wires immediately. Gremlins will also insult you dreadfully over the radio-telephone, but there is not much you can do about it. Repartee only makes them vindictive.

Finally, it is worthy of note that Mr. Kaiser's enormous cargo-planes will most certainly result in bigger and better gremlins. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Another Impending Apology

"I regret to say that Mr. and Mrs. — are leaving for Colwyn Bay, after many years' loyal worship here. . . . Mr. — has served as a sidesman and offered to be Hon. Assistant Treasurer, if called upon. I am thankful to say this has not been necessary."

Parish Magazine.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"CAN I INTEREST YOU IN ONE OF THESE?"

[It has been suggested that both this country and the U.S.A. would benefit by a better knowledge of each other's history.]



"A remarkably fine gang of toughs, Colonel!"

Westward Ho!

IT may be that of all the heroes, adventurers, men of genius and what not that we read of in any biography, there is some counterpart walking about our world to-day, waiting only for his opportunity, or perhaps making it. The fancy is not too wild to entertain and keep by one, though too elusive to prove. But only the other day I met, walking our pavements, a man with the spirit of Columbus. It was hardly to be expected; for, though our generation has plenty of fine vigour, the modern world would hardly seem to offer any scope in which such a spirit could thrive. And yet thrive it did. Potts was his name; and not only had he an ambition as large as that of Columbus when he set out to look for India, but he actually achieved his discovery. As he told me all about it, and as his discovery must be of some importance to all who are interested in geography, I will now record it, in the confidence that it will throw a new light on our planet.

He was looking for the Near East. And, like Columbus, he turned West for it. I am afraid my last sentence is a bit obvious: we know that the Middle East includes the whole of Libya, and, as that reaches to a longitude running through Denmark and Norway, there is obviously not much room for the Near East in the eastern hemisphere. Potts listened for the news on the wireless every day, as we all do, and read it in the newspapers, and knew that

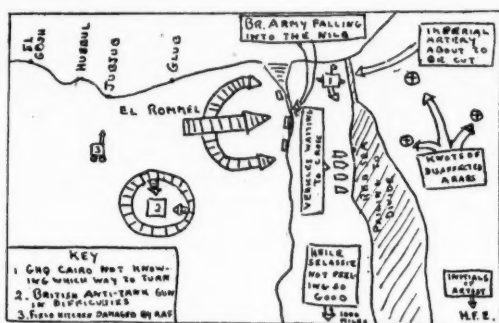
Egypt, Greece, Malta and Libya were in the Middle East. Where then was the Near East? Potts did not set sail as Columbus did when he looked for India: he did the whole thing at home; but he found the Near East all right. He worked it out like this: he got out a map and saw how far the Far East went, and placed that as being bounded by the International Date Line, which runs through East Siberia and the Fiji Islands. That is longitude 180 degrees. Then he looked up the western boundary of Libya, which is about 8 degrees west. He divided the 172 degrees that compose the Middle and Far East by two, which gave him their mutual boundary at longitude 94 degrees, which runs, roughly between India and Burma. The Near East of course begins with the western boundary of Libya, for we have none of us ever been told that the Middle East goes any further west than that, but Potts wanted to find out where it ends. So he took a measurement equal to the other two divisions of the East, that is to say 86 degrees, and laid it down on the map with one end touching Libya, to see where it would go. It went beyond New York and Montreal, through Cuba, and included the whole of South America, with the exception of a little bit of Ecuador and Peru, and funnily enough went right through the Gulf of Darien, silent on one of whose peaks we may well watch it with a mild surmise.

ANON.

Brigadier Trounces Egypt Brass-Hats.

GENERAL Montgomery's victory in Egypt (which I foresaw as long ago as last December) will have results which may be so far-reaching as to deserve an article to themselves. This is saying a good deal.

Let us look at the situation calmly and without undue optimism, yet resisting any tendency to underrate what is after all a considerable achievement. We have only to ask ourselves what would have happened if the battle had gone the other way to realize that the rout of the enemy has been on balance an undoubted advantage to the Allies. Had Rommel been able to throw back Montgomery's advancing columns in those first critical days and to follow up this initial success with a smashing attack on our forces inevitably disorganized by the failure of their offensive, he might well have struck right through to Cairo and hurled the whole of the Eighth Army into the Nile. This would have been a serious set-back to the Allied cause in the Middle East. (See plan.) That he did not do so is due to the fact that instead of retreating we advanced and thus by a brilliant stroke of generalship frustrated the entire German conception of *schwerpunkt* terminating in a *Drang nach Osten*.



What would have happened if we had lost.

I will now try to answer a few questions at as great length as possible.

WHY DID ROMMEL RETREAT?

A defeated army has the option of retreating or remaining where it is and being annihilated. Rommel, probably wisely, chose the former alternative. He is a capable general and we may assume that he considered the whole position very carefully before giving the order to withdraw. In just the same way General Auchinleck decided to withdraw earlier in the year on the grounds that to remain would have been a strategic error—with this difference, that whereas Auchinleck in retreating fell back closer to his base, Rommel in now falling back closer to his. If the distinction is not readily clear to the lay reader I will put it this way. No army can fight successfully without supplies. The further an army advances from its base the more difficult becomes the problem of feeding, clothing and arming the troops. Fresh fish was almost unobtainable at Blub last February.

Herein lies the whole danger of our present position.

WILL MERSA MATRUH HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE TIME THESE WORDS ARE IN PRINT?

It is dangerous to prophesy about something that has

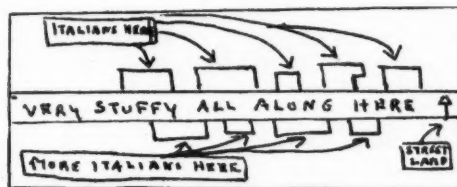
already happened or not happened, as the case may be, but I venture to say that Matruh will fall into our hands like an overripe plum the moment Montgomery has amassed before it forces strong enough to sweep away its admittedly formidable defences at a single determined blow. How long it will take to bring up such punching-power, time alone will show. Montgomery is not the man to waste time, nor on the other hand to overrun his strength. He can be relied on to take Matruh as soon as he is ready, and not a moment before.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS OF BEING IN BENGHAZI BY CHRISTMAS?

The British people have become accustomed to being in Benghazi by Christmas, and for this reason I expect to see us there again this year. The weather is pleasantly cool in December and the streets are gay with huckleberry boughs carried by jostling crowds of Senussi and Tripolitanian Jews. In the shops, too, may be seen bead necklaces from El Hobo rubbing shoulders with jade earrings and cigarette-lighters from the more modern bazaars of Bomba and even distant Tripoli itself. The British Commander-in-Chief knows the value of these things and can be relied on to see that he gets there in time, even if his troops have to run the last five miles in singlet and shorts.

CAN WE TAKE TRIPOLI BEFORE EASTER?

No. Nothing is to be gained by being in Tripoli at Easter. I was there myself in April 1929 and found the place stuffy, ill-lighted and overrun with Italians. (See plan.) It is not likely to have improved much since those days.



High Street, Tripoli

Strategically, the possession of Tripoli would be an undoubted asset, since it would enable us to invade Italy, wipe up the Wop army, and by infiltrating over the Alps aim one prong of a gigantic pair of pincers at the heart of Germany. I do not propose, for obvious reasons, to discuss the precise direction from which the other prong (or arm) would pivot.

But we must guard against the danger of looking too far ahead. Before Montgomery can strike at Tripoli, he must secure not only his rear and flanks but also the aerodromes at Guba, Huq, Mucka, Bambi, El Fut, Tutu and the big landing-ground at Woppa. This in itself is a considerable problem which I shall solve next week.

IS ANYTHING TO BE GAINED BY GOING ON WITH THIS?

Not much. Montgomery must make his plans irrespective of anything I may say. This is due to the length of time it takes to get *Punch* to Advanced Headquarters in the desert. Once again, you see, it is a matter of supply.

H. F. E.

At the Pictures

"WENT THE DAY WELL?"
(THE LONDON PAVILION)

HAVING decided to invade England in Whitsun 1942, and wishing to disrupt our system of radio-location, Hitler, two days before the invasion, drops forty parachutists near an old-world village called Bramley Green. They drive into the village in lorries, which they have presumably picked up on arrival, and being disguised as Royal Engineers are cordially welcomed by the inhabitants. Their faultless English might have aroused mistrust in a more sophisticated environment, but it is their carefree way of noting down their card-scores in Continental numerals and carrying slabs of chocolate marked "Chokolade—Wien" which first puts the keener minds of the village on their track. There is a Fifth Columnist in the village, an Englishman of German origin, *Oliver Wilsford* (LESLIE BANKS). He warns *Commander Ortler* (BASIL SYDNEY), who, hitherto a charming and urbane Englishman, now comes out in his true character, locking up most of the villagers in the church, killing the mild and heroic old Vicar (C. V. FRANCE), and ordering children to be shot at dawn. The postmistress, *Mrs. Collins*, excellently played by MURIEL GEORGE, tries to phone through to a neighbouring town, but is killed; and the sole visitor to the village from the outside world, a lady who sings "Cherry Ripe" as she drives through the pleasant countryside, comes and goes under the watchful eyes of the enemy without any inkling that her afternoon call has been paid in unusual circumstances.

Breaking out of the church under the leadership of a young sailor, some of the villagers barricade themselves in the Manor House. At sunset the Germans, stealing through the Manor House grounds to the accompaniment of birds piping their evensong, attempt to rush the garrison, but news of these strange happenings has leaked out, and a mixed force of Home Guard and

Regulars rushes up in time to obliterate the enemy.

The film is exciting, if it is nothing else, but it might have been given a

title which does not by implication rank the overthrow of forty men marooned in a hostile country with Marathon or the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Bramley Green is even more golden-hearted than *Mrs. Miniver's* village, and unless the war ends first it may in a year or so be difficult for film-goers to distinguish between rural England and Eden before the Fall.

"CROSSROADS" (THE EMPIRE)

David Talbot (WILLIAM POWELL) lost his memory in a railway accident, and apparently had no papers on him to establish his identity or give any clue to his former life. Not, perhaps, a very promising starting-point for a brilliant career in diplomacy, yet when the film opens the French Foreign Office is about to send him as ambassador to Brazil. At this point he receives a letter demanding the immediate payment of a debt of one million francs. Arrested and brought to trial, the writer of the letter, *Carlos Le Duc* (VLADIMIR SOKOLOFF), insists that *Talbot* is really a criminal, *Jean Pelletier* by name, and that the debt is genuine. When counsel calls *Michele Allaine* (CLAIRE TREVOR), a beautiful blonde, and she declares that *Talbot* is her long-lost lover *Pelletier*, *Talbot* begins to look worried. However, the arrival in court of *Henri Sarrou* (BASIL RATHBONE), who

testifies that he knew *Pelletier* and was with him when he died, puts everything right, and *Talbot* and his devoted wife (HEDY LAMARR) go back to their palatial home with light hearts. *Sarrou* turns up and is warmly thanked by *Talbot*, who is rudely shaken when *Sarrou* hisses "I certainly admire your nerve, you double-crossing swine!" What with one thing and what with another, for *Sarrou* is as ingenious as he is ruthless, *Talbot* presently begins to wonder if he may not be *Pelletier* after all. So rattled indeed does he become that for a time one almost loses faith if not in the old type of diplomat at least in the resourcefulness of WILLIAM POWELL. One's alarm is needless, and everything ends happily for the deserving and unhappily for the others. H. K.



[Went the Day Well?]

A SAILOR'S HOMEWORK

Tom, the A.B. FRANK LAWTON



[Crossroads]

DIPLOMAT IN A JAM

David Talbot WILLIAM POWELL
Michele Allaine CLAIRE TREVOR
Lucienne Talbot HEDY LAMARR

Prelude and Performance

I—The Meeting

"H AND me the A.B.C., will you, Jean?—I've got to look out a train to this frightful place where I've got to speak to-morrow."

"I'll do it for you . . . What's the name, Newborough? . . . My dear, the trains are beyond words, appalling!"

"They would be. From what I remember of the last ghastly show of the kind I was let in for, they are a pretty match for the inhabitants. Why I was ever such a crass idiot . . .!"

* * * * *

"Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is seldom in this world that duty can combine successfully with pleasure, but I can honestly say that when I was asked to repeat my delightful visit of last year, it was with real gratitude that I accepted your invitation. I hope you don't regard me as a stranger. I know I don't think of myself in that light. . . ."

II—Other People's Children

"My dear, you know the horror that's upon me for tea this afternoon? Alan and Bee's children."

"It's not true!"

"Unfortunately it is. I haven't faced up to them for weeks. Last time Edward broke my favourite teapot and Davina ate my sweet ration for a month."

"Edward is said to be turning out very intelligent."

"I don't believe a word of it. Bee thinks everything they do is perfect, that's all. She even thinks the wretched Davina is graceful. Graceful, I ask you!"

"They certainly are revolting children."

"My dear, revolting isn't the word."

* * * * *

"Well, we really must be going, my dear."

"Must you really? I don't feel I've seen half enough of the children."

"I'm so sorry about the gramophone record."

"Darling, don't give it a thought. It doesn't matter the least little bit."

"Edward gets so excited by music, you know. He was just so thrilled by the record that he broke it in sheer enthusiasm."

"My dear, of course. He's going to be something wonderful when he's grown-up, I'm certain."



"Just supposing a General Grant wanted to come through."

"Well, I'm so glad they haven't been a nuisance."

"They've been good as gold. And that enchanting little dance Davina did . . . you are lucky to have such talented children!"

III—The Birthday Present

"And this is from Iris."

"What will it be like—awful?"

"I expect so. I adore Iris, as you know, but her taste is just the end."

"Let me help. . . ."

"It's just done . . . there . . . what on earth? Golly!"

"Can you imagine anyone in their right senses choosing that colour?"

"And that nauseating fringe, my dear."

"What will you do with it?"

"It must go in Dick's study, that's all. After all, it's his sister. Oh, dear, oh, dear, what shall I say to Iris?"

* * * * *

"Darling, I had to ring you up at once to thank you for that divine lamp."

"Do you really like it, my dear?"

"I am quite thrilled with it."

"Well, I thought you needed a new lamp for your bedroom."

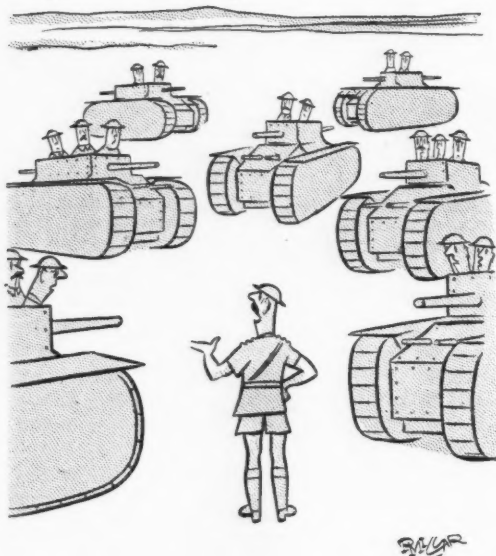
"Oh, but I'm not going to be so selfish as to have it where only I can see it. I'm going to put it in Dick's study so that he can enjoy it too."

"I'm so glad you feel that. I must say, it is nice to give a present that's a success."

"But you always do that, darling."

M. D.

H. J. Talking



"Is there anyone here who can ride a horse?"

Nurses

THERE they go, the nurses,
Up and down the wards—
Basin, bandage, medicine, or tray—
Hurry! hurry! hurry! . . . On the hard and hollow boards
There are feet, going fast, all day.

Strange, the creed of nurses—
Not so strange to them:
All things must be beautiful and bright.
Even if their senses droop from three to four A.M.,
They are there—looking neat—all night.

Why do girls go nursing?
What sustains their feet
Up and down for mile on aching mile?
How can flesh endure such food, cold draughts, or
choking heat—
As they do—with a bright stiff smile?

Always there are nurses,
Swiftly walking through,
Wheeling round the trolley's changeless load;
Stepping out with spirit and a starchy faint "frou-frou"
On the march down their old hard road.

Heaven bless all nurses!
Give their feet soft paths!
May their spirits find that comfort waits—
Far from charts, thermometers and daily blanket-baths—
When they walk through the Golden Gates!

NOTHING annoys me more than to be told that animals like me, because I have frequently observed that they do not care much for anyone with whom they have nothing in common. A wolfhound, for example, has little interest in anything but food, whereas High Types immerse themselves in the pleasures of the mind and dislike any victuals about which they cannot talk intelligently. Animal-lovers compensate for being less than human by claiming to be very moral, but it is much easier to be charitable to a Pekinese than to a relation, because you are not expected to lend it money, and though it may think bitter things about you it cannot say them. People who claim to be dog-lovers spend much of their time training their pets, such training consisting of teaching them not how to enjoy themselves but how not to be a nuisance to their owners. A well-trained dog will curl up and go to sleep when told, but in-laws or the poor will not do this. When you consider all the different kinds of animals there are and how few of them are used as pets, suspicion is what will lurk in your mind. If a High Type did wish to love an animal it would choose one which was rather neglected and presented a real tough job—a stoat, for example.

By and large the most easy-going man I have ever met was my Uncle Kurtis. Nothing disturbed him, not even when the sides of his spectacles somehow got magnetized. As soon as he sat down at a table knives would leap up and dangle down his cheeks: when he was dancing pins would shoot out of his partners. He got so tired of picking things off his face only to find them fly back again that he had some special insulators made, and they were long thin tubes of porcelain and quite expensive, there not being much demand for them. Being so white and shiny they distracted clients and what they distracted clients from was matrimony, he running an agency to rationalize it. This agency attracted many customers by bright advertising schemes, such being unusual in the profession. Some lots were veiled and raffled, others carried with them a ticket for a cruise. The fee was worked out by a complicated formula which took account of dowry, looks, family and probable wedding presents. He also ran an insurance business so that clients could indemnify themselves against paying costs in divorce actions. One way and another, he provided occasional employment for many of his relations; my wife, for example, used to get commissions for wedding-cakes, which she made in many novel shapes, among such

THE MERCHANT NAVY

FROM America comes news of further steps to share the burden of the Merchant Navy in the Battle of Supply. Remember, it is to the sacrifices of these sailors that you owe many of the comforts of civilized life which you still enjoy.

In return, will you not contribute to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND? A gift to this Fund enables you to express your gratitude in tangible form. You owe it to our sailors to see that they are well provided with extra comforts. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.



"I'll just nip downstairs to the street and check up that it is YOUR black-out. Don't adjust it; leave it as it is."

being the Bank of England and the Statue of Liberty. Sometimes jocular Best Men would bribe her to make a cake which no bride could cut, though it was never really necessary so to do.

Once a year I give a Tenants' Outing, and to this come B. Smith and my brother Coot, who is not strictly a tenant but uses the spare bedroom more often than not. The outing always begins with the presentation of flowers to my wife, but B. Smith is apt to order them in the shape of a wreath, and it is Coot's job to intercept them on delivery and hurriedly twist them into a bouquet. Next Coot makes a witticism to set the tone for the proceedings, and to get this witticism just right takes a good deal of to and fro beforehand. Then we climb into a high-wheeled carriage. It has to be high-wheeled, as since we stopped keeping a horse we have to lean over the side and turn the wheels ourselves, this being usual in invalid-chairs but rare among carriage folk. It gives us a sense of unity of purpose, but unfortunately rather distracts us from scenery, so my wife does not concern herself with transport but describes to us features of interest as we pass along, what catches her eye most being expensive things which come out of the rates. It will be seen that in a two-wheeled carriage propelled by three people one side will go faster than the other, this having a confusing effect on the direction. The way we meet this difficulty is for B. Smith, who is agile, to help each side alternately. When we are tired we stop, and this is more interesting than having a fixed destination and where we stop mostly is half-way up hills. Owing to our not having brakes we have to keep tight hold of the wheels and my wife has to lean over and feed us with sandwiches, B. Smith liking to bite her hand and pretend he thinks it is

a rissole. We then return home for sports and pastimes, on which we have a very old book that has come down in the family, though most of the pages are missing except those dealing with cribbage and leapfrog. After some hours of these my wife strikes a serious note by saying that too much pleasure always gives her chilblains, and the occasion ends with a speech of thanks by Coot, who is liable, if not stopped, to digress about Magna Carta, he having won a prize in the *New Statesman* for converting same into limericks.

Every Christmas my wife takes the opportunity to organize a carol party, and this she combines with a cycle-race, having a theory that before the festivities of the season it is as well to do many strenuous and healthy things. The party starts level and for convenience the number of carols they sing is restricted to one, so that even after the contestants string out a bit most households will get a pretty good idea of what this carol is. On one occasion it happened that, the party being very evenly matched indeed, there was a dead-heat and the single line was all some of the houses heard. One trouble is about collections, without which many people do not consider carol-singing complete, and we have made a rule that anyone who has a puncture, and is therefore out of the race in any case, shall collect wherever he happens to be.

Le Mot Juste

"In the case of theft of blankets, a bed-cover and an alarm clock from a house in Hall Street, she was jointly charged with her daughter, who pleaded not guilty."—*Newcastle Journal*.

"Beer can no longer be transported from one State to another in Australia without a permit."—*Reuter*.—*Financial Times*.
Externally, that is.



"Fancy them keeping a thing like that in war-time!"



"I'm afraid business conditions won't allow us to raise your salary, Miss Simpson, but as a slight token of their esteem the Directors have decided to present you with all their personal sweet coupons."

Sleep

THE most beautiful thing in the world to-day is sleep. We had other loves once, but now this is the dearest, the best.

The dark-blue velvet wave that bears us deep into strange unbelievable places where man is still blessed; to flowered fields where we stand bent with laughter; to white beaches where we lie without a care; wherever we go the people we have loved follow after, our mothers and fathers, our friends, and even our dogs are there.

Sleep despises the years. It cares not for time or space. In its arms we know for certain there is life without death.

There are no barriers. We go without moving from place to place; the past, the present, and the future can be lived in a breath, and countries conquered before the end of a sigh, and meetings and partings and songs and loves be ours as we turn in our narrow beds where our shadowy bodies lie.

Sleep is a beautiful thing, and kind. It does not spurn the stupid, the ugly, or the faint at heart. The foolish shall seek it and find it again and again, and though it cannot be won by wisdom or wit or any proven art, even the wicked man shall not woo it entirely in vain.

V. G.



POPPY DAY

In Hope and Memory



"Oyez! Oyez! This is to say that the Great Armada having retired, it is now possible to release the news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth spent the last two nights at Bunkworth Grange!"

Little Talks

HULLO!
 Taxi!
 How are you?
 Hullo, old boy. Taxi!
 Why the hurry?
 I'm dining in the remoter intestines of Chelsea about an hour ago. Taxi!
 Oh, well, never mind.
 "Never mind"? Don't be an ass, old boy. Taxi! I tell you I'm an hour late. I was asked to meet a man who may give me a new job. Tax— And I happen to know that Nigel's opening his last bottle of port. Taxi!
 "Port style" from Newfoundland, I expect.
 Well, anyhow—Taxi! The trouble is the house is at the heart of one of the Chelsea mazes, and if you walk you may be lost for life. Tax—oh, sorry, sir. And even if you get there you're giddy for days. Taxi!
 That, I think, was the Polish Ambassador's car.
 Then he ought to have stopped. What are we fighting for? Taxi!
 That is an ambulance. What time are you due?

I was due at half-past eight.
 What sort of Time?
 Half-past eight, I tell you. 2030, if you insist.

I meant, Summer Time—Greenwich Mean Time—Solar Time—Sidereal Time—Local Mean Time—Ship's Apparent Time?

Who cares? Taxi!

It makes rather a difference.

Well, Summer Time, I suppose. No, it's November 9—it can't be. Or is it?

Strangely enough, it is. But I was trying to induce in you a sense of calm and proportion. Here you are, nearly frantic, because you think you're an hour behind. But, as a matter of fact, you're not. You're an hour ahead. By Greenwich Mean Time it is only just 2035 now.

A lot of use that is to me. All I know is that I'm an hour behind dinner-time. Taxi!

Ah, but you could tell your host you thought he meant Greenwich Time—say you're one of the old-fashioned folk who always stick to Greenwich Time—

I'm afraid he'd give me an old-fashioned look. If you think you're being helpful, old boy— TAXI!!

Have you, by the way, the faintest notion what is meant by Greenwich Mean Time?

Well, everybody knows that, old boy.

Do they? I mean, Does he?

It's—it's Greenwich Time—good old British time—best in the world!

It's not quite as simple as that. Why "Mean"?

Can't imagine.

Have you ever heard of the Mean Sun?

Sounds like a nasty crack at the British sun. But we can take it. Taxi!

No, it's not that. The Mean Sun is the sun by whose movements Mean Time is measured. But it doesn't really exist at all.

Taxi! . . . Steady, old boy! What was that? Sun doesn't exist?

You know, perhaps, that the sun is supposed to go round the earth?

Well, of course. It's obvious.

It's obvious—but it isn't true. It seems obvious to you that you are three

miles from Chelsea, an hour late for dinner. Perhaps that is not true, either. For all you know, you may be sitting back swilling port.

Very comforting, old boy. Taxi!

Anyhow the sun does seem to go round the earth—like a Metropolitan train leaving Victoria Station and going round the Inner Circle.

Which way?

By Gloucester Road, Notting Hill Gate, and Paddington, West-about. When it seems to get back to Victoria (or rather, Greenwich), that is the end of one solar day—and the beginning of another.

Jolly good show!

And on this delightful fiction most of our practical arrangements of human life, much of our poetry and imagery, and all our navigation, are founded.

I always thought there was something phoney about everything. Taxi!

It's even more phoney than you think. The old sun's train, you see, doesn't go round the Inner Circle at an even pace.

That's bad, old boy. Why not?

I'm not quite sure. But it's really the earth's fault, not his. Anyhow, between Victoria and Gloucester Road he ambles along sensibly, it seems; but then he breaks into a gallop and keeps it up to Notting Hill Gate, where he has a sort of fainting-fit. Then he slows down again to get his breath, so to speak.

H'm—rather like the Hare and the Tortoise?

Very like.

But look here, I thought we set our clocks by the old sun. Taxi!

No. If you put one of our clocks beside a sundial they wouldn't tell the same time—except a few times a year. Sometimes they'd be as much as sixteen minutes apart.

Some bungling somewhere.

At the moment, for example, my watch says 9.40, which means 2140 B.S.T., or 2040 G.M.T. But by the real sun the time at Greenwich is about 2055½. And here, I suppose, allowing for a slight difference of longitude, it's about 2055.

But look here, the whole thing sounds a most ghastly muddle. Oughtn't you to speak to Winston? Taxi!

No. Fortunately, our wise astronomers, chiefly British, dealt with it long ago. Obviously you couldn't run the modern world on a sun which alternately sprinted and slacked.

Not a world in which one's expected to stay late at the office and be punctual at Chelsea without the aid of a motor-cab!

Exactly. So they invented an

imaginary "Mean" Sun which goes round the Equator at an even pace. And that's the sun our clocks are set by.

And it doesn't exist at all? Good gracious! But why "Mean"?

Because its performance is based on the "mean" or average performance of the real sun over a year. If it was called Greenwich Average Time a few people might know what it was all about. As it is, I don't know anyone who does.

Well, whatever time I'm late by, I'm late.

I suppose, by the way, that you didn't make your appointment by Sidereal, or Starry Time?

Christmas! What's that?

The stars, also, go round the Inner Circle, so to speak. And when one of them gets back to Victoria a Sidereal Day has been completed.

Are there Mean Stars? Taxi!

No. Not necessary. There's no variation in the Sidereal Day. But unfortunately it's not the same length as the Mean Solar Day.

Oh, dear! More muddle.

If a star left Victoria at the same time as the Mean Sun it would get back to Victoria nearly four minutes earlier. So Starry Time is always ahead.

Ahead? Well, what time is it now by the stars?

A little after midnight.

That's not much use to me. Taxi!

True. But I was hoping, as I said, to induce in you a sense of calm and proportion.

All jolly fine! You've evidently eaten. I've not. And my wife will boil me.

Ah, but you must explain to her—you must explain to your host—that not even the heavenly bodies find it practicable to observe the same times. How, then, can you, a mere human

body, be expected to move at precisely the same rate as another?

I don't think— Taxi!

All human bodies, you should say, are different. Some are like the stars (your wife, I expect)—always ahead. Others, your dreary host, maybe, plod round the cosmos like the Mean Sun, never varying the pace, never missing an appointment. But you—you are as the True Sun, the prime source of light and heat; and no one must be surprised or resentful if your motions are a shade less regular.

D'you think that will impress them?

Well, failing that, I should raise the whole subject of Comparative Importance. Do you see that light?

Where?

A little south of east—at the end of the street.

Yes. Disgraceful. Or is it a traffic-light?

It's a star. It's Betelgeuse, the top star in Orion. Do you realize that that star is twenty-five million times as big as the Sun?

Twenty-five million— Taxi!

Twenty-five million times. Now, on the scale of that comparison how puny must all our human affairs appear! Against that background can even your host maintain that it really matters what time your microscopic frame arrives at Chelsea, or when—

Taxi! By gosh, he's stopped! Farewell, old boy. I do feel calmer now.

A. P. H.

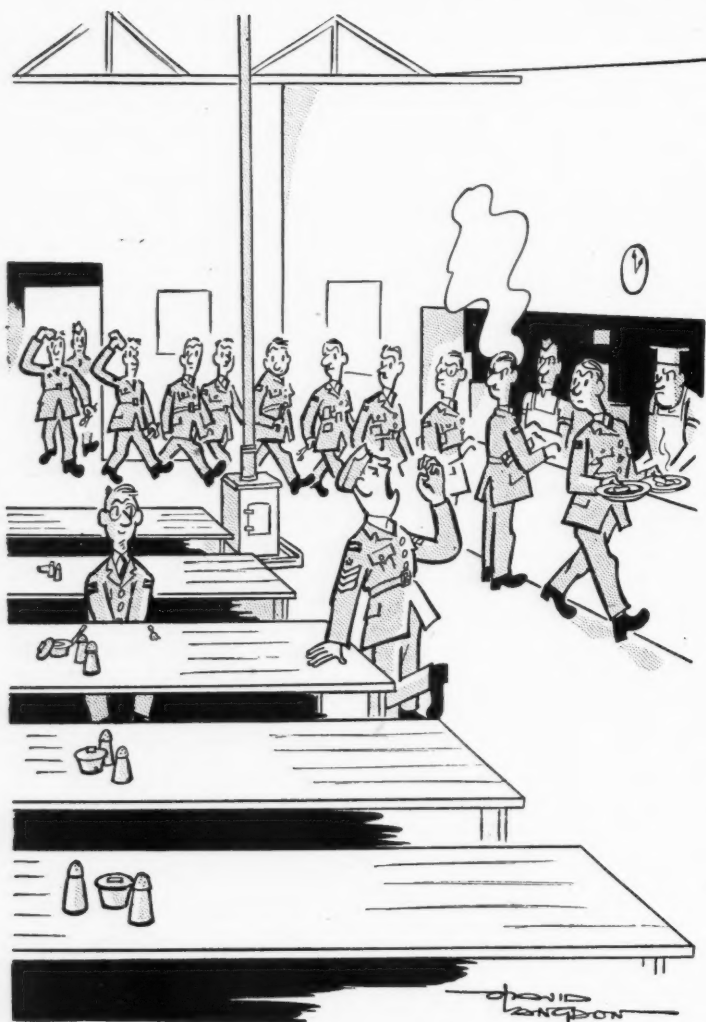
In Utrumque Paratus

"Unfortunately present-day conditions make it impossible for us to operate such a scheme, which would entail a large staff of competent 'GAS SERVICE ENGINEERS.' We are, however, preparing for the World to come . . ."

Circular Letter from a Gas Company.



"Standing for seven only inside."



"Young gentleman 'ere would like some well-done roast sirloin of beef, new pertaters and cabbage, and a sweet to foller."

Our War-Time Query Corner

Ask Evangeline!

Q. My mother's uncle is in the habit of draping two mattresses over the grand piano when Jerry visits us, and utilizing it as a refuge-room. The other day when I attempted to play Herbert's "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life," I seemed quite unable to get any volume out of the piano. Our tuner has gone into a slaughter-house for the duration, so could your music experts tell me what is wrong?

PHILOMELA.

A. It would be interesting to know how the old gentleman employs his time in this "refuge-room" and whether the mattresses had been removed before you tried to play. Never attempt anything classical while the lid is thus loaded or while relatives are still dormant on the pedals, or you will certainly find that the tone is deadened. Avoid also placing fish-bones, pins or bread upon the open keyboard, as such articles are apt to

get inside and produce a jarring or whizzing sound.

* * * * *

Q. Since patriotically disposing of my Daimler for the duration, I find I am virtually a prisoner in my own house (Beetlewell Towers), as my husband and I, keen patrons of The People's Spare The Horse Guild, neither use horses as a means of transport ourselves nor permit those in our employment to do so. Other members of the household possess pedal cycles, but neither my husband nor I feel this to be a mode of locomotion suited to one in my position. Certain among the Continental nobility have been in the habit of bicycling about their estates, I am told, but after all there has never been any of that type of *sans-culotterie* among the older women of our own upper-class families.

BONA, COUNTESS BEETLEWELL.

A. I take it the earl himself has a cycle, and probably your indoor man too. If so, a rather tasteful little turn-out can very easily be contrived. Take a perfectly ordinary wheelbarrow, Countess, and pass a stout shaft horizontally beneath the handles, lashing firmly, then fixing ends of shaft to the carriers of your husband's and footman's machines. The barrow is thus raised permanently at an angle, and when the cycles are in motion the passenger rides facing the direction from which she came, always a restful mode of travelling. The inside of the wheelbarrow is upholstered, the outside enamelled in some uniform ground-colour and then stamped with the Beetlewell arms. After the war, a lid may be added and you will have either a useful container for knitting or kittens, or a most original drawing-room seat for four.

* * * * *

Q. I wonder how many of your readers have tried cooking a three-course meal for nine, using only one gas-burner? A sweet pudding in a covered basin (Semolina Secrets would be nice) is placed in a good-sized saucepan with the entrée (Woolton Mousse or Little Soufflé of Spam) heaped around it. An enamelled kidney bowl, obtainable at any surgical stores or first-aid post, fits snugly against the outside of the pan and is used for boiling potatoes, whilst a second vegetable is suspended in a knitted dish-cloth underneath the saucepan-lid, the lid being inverted to act as a container for soup. Your custard heats in any odd length of lead-piping left over from the plumber's

visit, coiled round the inside of the pan. A nifty fuel-saving idea!

(Miss) GLORIA BUTTERS.

A. We are passing on your tip, Miss Butters.

* * * *

Q. As president and foundress of the Look Before and Behind Group, it has been my lot from time to time to be summoned to various parts of the kingdom for the purpose of releasing earth-bound spirits. This week, quite unexpectedly, I have received a summons to release the spirit of a male wig-dresser in Baden-Baden (Swiss-French by birth), but no one seems able to tell me the correct procedure for getting into an alien country in wartime. Do I write to the Red Cross?

(Mrs.) VILMA CHAMPNEYS.

A. I doubt whether your problem comes strictly within the province of the Red Cross. It seems to me more a matter for your own psychic inspiration. You might, of course, get yourself taken on a Commando raid in some capacity, Mrs. Champneys, but personally I cannot help feeling that it might be mistaken kindness to the wig-dresser in question not to leave him earth-bound for the duration.

* * * *

Q. Is there anything against letting hens sit on dried egg-powder?

FRANK FIDLER.

A. Certainly not, if they wish to do so. I could imagine a thoughtful hen hatching out some very nice little feathered omelettes. Go ahead, Mr. Fidler.

* * * *

Q. Is there anything on the level a very small cinema proprietor can do in a town like this (Ardnastrathmuirloch, Scotland) where folks look three times at an extra fourpence before paying it in tax to see what we have been featuring of recent weeks, admitted not the latest releases, namely Al Jolson in *The Singing Fool* and Jean Harlow in *One Hundred Per Cent Pure*? We always reckon to meet our patrons halfway.

REG. PEACOCK, Esq.

A. A happy method of meeting them halfway these days might be to let them *share* seats (this should be popular with the younger folk), or to allow members of the same family to use a seat in relays. They would compare notes and piece together the feature film at home afterwards. Or if you thought the constant passing in and out might make for disturbance and were willing to consider some outlay, why not have seats which

could be raised and lowered after the manner of a cinema organ? This would dispense with the need for usherettes entirely, as each filmgoer would get into his chair in a foyer underneath the actual hall, rising unobtrusively into place like an early crocus. An added attraction to patrons would be the fun of speculating as to what one might find next to one from time to time as the programme continued.

* * * *

Q. I do so want my brother to have an old-fashioned wedding, but this is hardly possible without confetti. I understand that if we used rice we might be fined for wasting foodstuffs. What else could we do?

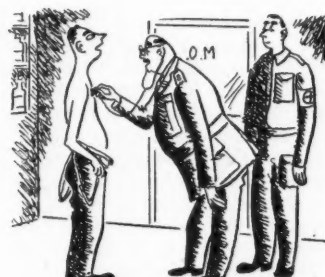
CISSIE WHITLOW (Miss).

A. You would not be wasting food if the rice was picked up again. Why not make rather a feature of the

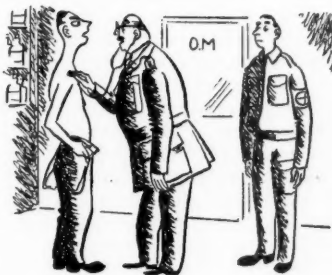
sweeping up? Present each guest on arrival at the church with a tiny soft brush, tied with a bow of red, white and blue ribbon, and have the rice collected to the strains of "There'll Always Be An England," played as an organ voluntary. Bridesmaids and groomsman should carry something a little more elaborate, either flue-brushes or feather dusters, the handles bound with cream tulle. But if, on principle, you feel that this is a wrong use for cereals, I would go to the salvage authorities and ask to borrow a sack of shredded litter. As I dare say you are aware, letters and documents of a confidential nature can now be rendered illegible by shredding, and in these days of paper shortage material subjected to this process would certainly create a gala-like atmosphere, thrown in moderate quantities.



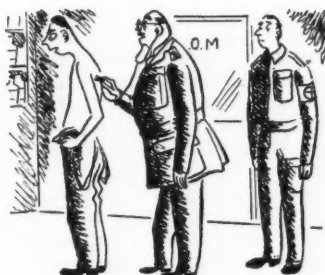
"Cough, please—



Cough again—



And again—



Once more . . ."



At the Play

A CHEER FOR REPERTORY

WE hear of high repertory enterprise—rewarded enterprise at that—in places as various and far apart as Dundee and Altrincham, York and Southport. In normal times when journeying did not have to be more or less necessary, we should have styled ourselves a new COBBETT and gone for Repertorial Rides (by train or car) round such places, the more especially since things theatrical are so blank in London at the moment. But it is by no means necessary to go so far afield. At least three theatres within the Home Counties are giving, week by week, plays which are either old and accepted masterpieces, more recent pieces which have the proved merit of being near-masterpieces, or brand-new plays on which London has not had any opportunity of setting its not-always-indisputable seal.

These three theatres are at Colchester, Amersham, and Windsor. With my hand placed on whatever corresponds in the dramatic critic to his heart, let me say that I would willingly motor-bicycle, bicycle and tricycle into these towns in Bucks, Berks and Essex to see IBSEN's *Rosmersholm* or TCHEHOV's *Seagull* or PRIESTLEY's *Time and the Conways* as well done as these three repertory theatres normally do plays of such high quality. Bearing in mind that repertory thrives on the spirit of competition and that all such theatres are sensitive and eager rivals, let me go back to that last sentence and make it plain that my order of places and vehicles is not necessarily respective, and that I wilfully leave the consequent tangle as it is, so that these three little theatres may work out for themselves—if it interests them—which one I best enjoy visiting.

Let me also say that I do not write flatteringly. Repertory theatres, like London theatres, have to enjoy much bad acting. There is—as there has to be—a dearth of young players, especially of young and even youngish men-players. Allowances have therefore to be made. Some further allowances are called for in the matter of costumes, décor, lighting, scene-changing, and the general style of the presentation. Persons who look for the quality of *finish* in a production which cannot, in the nature of week-by-week repertory, have had more than six days' rehearsal are not reasonable persons. But each of these three playhouses has a shrewd management and a more than clever producer, and each

has at least one reliable and experienced actress to lead the cast. Each company, moreover, has its promisers. Every time I have been to Colchester (twice recently), to Windsor (ten or a dozen times), or to Amersham (at least as often), I have been able to glimpse at any rate one subsidiary performance among the youngest players which contained a quality of promise varying between the dim and the rosy.

Given present circumstances, the standard of production is excellent. Given any circumstances, the standard of play is flabbergastingly high. Mr. ROBERT DIGBY, the Colchester manager, has just given a new piece, *The House in Dormer Forest*, a dramatization of MARY WEBB's novel by Mr. HUGH BURDEN. This being an experiment, Mr. DIGBY offered GALSWORTHY's *The Skin Game* the week before, and SHAW's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* the week after. He ekes out the present month with Mr. BAX's *The Venetian*, Mr. BEHRMAN's *No Time for Comedy*, and Mrs. SCHAUFFLER's *Parnell*. In his programme for the immediate future are *Twelfth Night*, *Heartbreak House*, and *The School for Scandal*. It is a list to make the hills of Essex skip like lambs, and the oysters to jump up in their beds with intellectual rapture.

At Windsor the Thames has been made to twinkle with two of Mr. COWARD's comedies, MOLNAR's enchanting *Guardians*, and WILDE's *Lady Windermere's Fan*. More serious and not less successful have been *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (a favourite stand-by of war-time repertory) and a new play by a young Czech author, Mr. DAVID WEHL's *Torn Banner*. At Amersham the beeches of Buckinghamshire have waved approvingly at M. BERNARD's *Springtime of Others* and *Invitation to a Voyage*, at IBSEN's *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House*. This charming little playhouse, run by its leading actress, Miss SALLY LATIMER, put on its 250th production at the end of October. By way of celebration and light relief the play chosen was TCHEHOV's *Uncle Vanya*!

But do plays of such quality draw an audience? asks the wondering reader. The answer is that these three theatres are, at least in my experience, almost invariably full. Think of the counter-attractions. Think of radio and fireside on a cold night in the country. Think of the great clamant cinemas, opposite and round the corner, with their famous stars loving and hating in tones almost as vibrant as those of the cinema-organ that preludes them. There have to be sops, of course. "The great London success" has to

be given by public demand, say one week in six, and the good actress who has been emulating ACHURCH and PRTOEFF has to set about giving a conscientious imitation of the current Miss Spry or Miss Larkish. But the amazing fact is that these perfunctory and faded repetitions grow fewer and fewer, and are less and less called for as these seasons go on. The exciting truth is that in the matter of plays of the highest artistic value a great audience, widespread throughout the country, is being gradually created by this noble and persistent enterprise of the little repertory theatres. They carry the banner of an Ideal and already, like *Hilda Wangel*, must be hearing "harps in the air." They suffer heartbreaks and setbacks—they have our helpless sympathy in the matter of training young players through their late teens (the all-important phase) and then abruptly losing them "for the duration." In "this season of shaken assumptions" their sheer hard work and their bold initiative must necessarily be taken for granted and receive scant publicity. They cannot, as things are, be given anything like what they require and deserve of help and guidance from professional and responsible criticism. Nevertheless theirs is a steady and continued triumph over the Philistines, and for this they deserve a far louder cheer than it lies in the power of any single writer to bestow.

A. D.

Children Always Win.

THE child was put into the carriage by the guard at Paddington. The guard asked, "Anybody going to Hereford?" and the warm-hearted soldier said, "Yes," and then smiled sheepishly, like a man who knows that he has made a mistake and that the mistake is irretrievable.

Secure in the knowledge that she was getting out at Reading, the old lady smiled, as if she loved children. So did the old gentleman. He was getting out at Reading too.

The child smiled back.

Everybody smiled.

The aunt who had come to see the child off did not bother to wait. She departed, smiling too.

The child said, "There's two engines on this train, one behind and one in front."

The old gentleman said, "The engine at the back isn't going with the train."

The child said, "I never said it was. It's an engine, though, isn't it? There's two engines on this train."



"Oh, no—she's fire-watching!"

The train started.

The child looked out of the window and said, "Three."

After which it said, "Four, five, six," in rapid succession.

The old lady said, "He's counting engines."

The child got up to ten.

The old gentleman hoped the child could not count above ten.

The child said, "Eleven."

When the child got to nineteen, the old lady, looking out of the window, said, "Twenty."

The old gentleman said, "Twenty-one."

The soldier spotted the twenty-second.

"Twenty-three," from the old lady.

They were taking up so much of the window between them that the child hadn't a chance.

"Twenty-four," from the old gentleman.

"That sort of engine doesn't count," the child said bravely.

"Of course it does," the old gentleman retorted with spirit.

"Twenty-five," said the soldier.

"You can't look out that side," said the child.

"Why not, son?" the soldier wanted to know.

"You can't," the child said. "It's a rule."

"Absurd," the old gentleman said.

"Perfectly ridiculous rule. Any engine counts as long as it is an engine."

Twenty-six.

"Twenty-seven," the old lady and the child said together.

"I saw it first," said the child.

"You didn't," the old lady declared firmly.

"Twenty-eight," from the old gentleman.

The child said, "I call counting engines silly."

The old gentleman said, "Nonsense." Quickly he added, "Twenty-nine."

The train ran into a cutting out of sight of other engines.

"Seventy-eight," said the child.

"You mustn't cheat," the old gentleman said sternly.

"I'm not cheating," said the child. "I saw the others just now, but I didn't say anything about them."

"No," said the old gentleman.

"Twenty-nine it is."

The child said, "I'm going to be sick."

Everyone stopped looking for engines. They stopped smiling too—all except the child, who started smiling again.

"A hundred and thirty-nine," it said.

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

An Introduction to Wordsworth

To the Victorians WORDSWORTH was the great poet of nature, who lived tranquilly among his lakes and mountains, undisturbed by personal or political upheavals. They did not know of his affair with ANNETTE VALLON, and they were not in a position to realize at all fully his enthusiasm for the French Revolution, his later revulsion against it, and his fear of the Napoleonic menace. But though they missed a good deal in WORDSWORTH, they missed far less than some recent critics who have allowed ANNETTE VALLON and the French Revolution to obscure the immeasurably greater importance in WORDSWORTH's life of his feeling for nature, the source of nearly all his happiness and of all his greatest work. It is with this unique element in WORDSWORTH that his latest critic, Mr. RAYMOND DEXTER HAVENS, is chiefly concerned (*The Mind of a Poet. A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with particular reference to The Prelude*. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 30/-). To ANNETTE VALLON Mr. HAVENS gives perhaps less space than she deserves, and to the French Revolution more, but the chief aim of his sincere and thoughtful book is to analyse what nature meant to WORDSWORTH.

WORDSWORTH, he says, did not look upon nature as a picture, but as a source of spiritual power. In his highest mood he wrote: "Our home is with infinitude, and only there;" and it is this sense of infinitude which permeates his best work, in which, as Mr. HAVENS says, there is always "a suggestion of the fading of the material world." The disparagement of WORDSWORTH in much recent criticism follows naturally from the materialistic outlook of the critics. Mr. ALDOUS HUXLEY once maintained that WORDSWORTH

would have given a more truthful account of nature had he lived in a tropical jungle, but did not adduce for purposes of comparison any verse written in the equatorial belt. To Marxist literary critics, rapture in the presence of natural beauty is merely a symptom of urban escapism, a sound grasp of rural economics being in their opinion an essential condition of benefiting from the countryside. Nor have religious institutionalists found an ally in WORDSWORTH, Mr. T. S. ELIOT hazarding the guess that posterity may value him less for his spiritual intuitions than for his rather vague anticipation of the social remedy advocated by G. K. CHESTERTON under the name of Distributism. To those who are not satisfied with these curious attempts at disposing of a very great poet, Mr. HAVENS's study can be cordially recommended.

H. K.

"Mark VII"

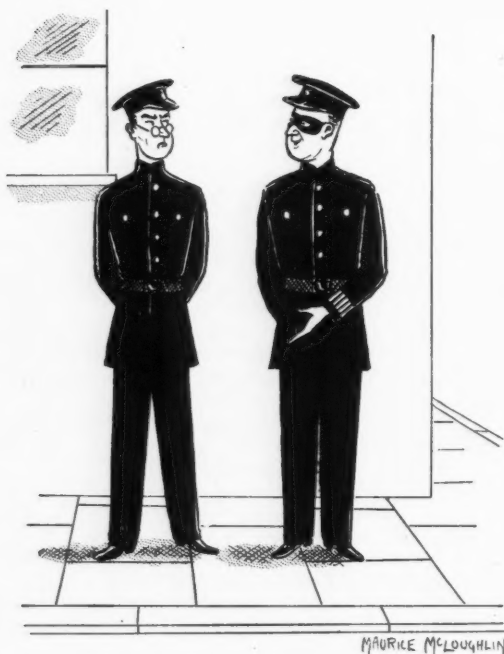
"An arch-individualist who shortened his life by his excessive labours for others," MAX PLOWMAN—"MARK VII" of *A Subaltern on the Somme*—is best known as a pacifist and Blake scholar. But the importance of the essays reprinted as *The Right to Live* (DAKERS, 7/6) lies less in their renouncement of war as an instrument grown too hideous for human use, than in their perception that the peace makes the war and "you cannot blame the soil for the seed you put in it." We won the last war. We should have shaped the peace. But we have no effective control, for the masses took over, PLOWMAN suggests, when government was far too complicated for their understanding, and demagoguery, not democracy, was the result. National authority, he feels, should cede to international and regional; and their aim should be a creative, not an acquisitive, life. Only religion can set our chaos in order. "Science is essentially without values." In this, and much else, PLOWMAN saw further and clearer than most of his fellow-survivors of the last war; and if some of his short cuts are impracticable now, the inspiration of his aims and the long-term feasibility of many of his means are well worth weighing.

H. P. E.

A Posse of Spies

It is a remarkable gift, the power to make a nasty wet night in the black-out more interesting, more positive, than a dozen fine days of other novelists, and Mr. PRIESTLEY is doubtless grateful for it. Few other writers to-day can make magic with the everyday—describe a mean room, or a small dreary hotel, or a railway-station on Sunday, so that it ceases to be a mere counter in the transactions between author and reader and exists for the reader as it exists for the people in the book. The magic crops up everywhere in *Black-out in Gretley* (HEINEMANN, 8/6), a solid, vigorous, bad-tempered story of counter-espionage in the Midlands. Gretley is a squalid and unlovely town, but useful to the war-effort—so useful that the enemy has established a whole posse of agents there—agents, it must be said, of an encouraging but inconceivable simplicity. It is a weakness in this adventure, as in some other modern ones, that it proceeds too smoothly, without the obstacles and setbacks that enhance the excitement of the great adventure stories. For excitement one must look instead to the character of the hunter, a clever, rather unhappy, and very indignant Canadian, who is disgusted with his job, with Gretley and with every other town like it. The Canadian, in fact, makes all the difference; for with or without the help of actors, Mr. PRIESTLEY has also the gift of projecting character, and character in action is always well worth watching.

J. S.



MAURICE McLOUGHLIN

"Mind you, this is only a part-time job with me."



"Then there's 'Blood and Sawdust' at the Splendorium, with Tyrone Gable and Hedy Colbert, a Wolf Picture Corporation smash hit; a gigantic, smashing, soul-searing epic."

Reconnaissance à Bernadette

Of most saints it can be said that they came, as their Master came, "for a sign of contradiction," a touchstone ranging their world more decisively for God or against Him. And of no saint was this more true than of BERNADETTE of Lourdes. She was so uniquely the mouthpiece of a message on which she never commented that it has seemed easy to dismiss her as the tool of a conspiracy. This attitude is not likely to survive *The Song of Bernadette* (HAMILTON, 10/6), the most moving and memorable of all possible tributes—and the most sincere. HERR FRANZ WERFEL came to Lourdes in June 1941. The English wireless announced his murder. He vowed that if he escaped to America he would "sing" BERNADETTE as a Jew had learnt to know her in his extremity. And here she is: the child whose unwavering truthfulness and the use her "lady" made of it are all that render her conspicuous. Here too is the world—of the café, the consulting-room, the prefecture, the presbytery—that did not want either of them. The novel is almost lyrically conceived and dramatically staged; not a part but has the right lines, not a property of its rather tawdry France that is lacking: a very great book indeed.

H. P. E.

The Press at the Front

Mr. J. L. HODSON, privileged to risk life and liberty in the name of first-hand knowledge and the freedom of the Press, has flown in a bomber raiding Crete, has played tip-and-run with enemy tanks all over the country-wide battlefield of Sidi Rezegh, has visited Tobruk in the days of the siege, and finally has worked his way into Rangoon just a few days ahead of the Japanese. Incidentally he mentions—in *War in the Sun* (GOLLANCZ, 11/6)—that he

has tried to shave in well-sugared tea and once collected a hundred and nineteen simultaneous mosquito-bites. He has some memorable pictures of the quick-shifting warfare of Libya and the Mediterranean—the gathering of both sides into tight-packed "leaguers" of armoured vehicles as darkness falls across the desert fighting; an Australian soldier, wounded and about to be sent back to the base, polishing up an old Italian bugle and struggling out to play the Last Post over the grave of a friend; the captain of a warship broadcasting news of the position to the ship's company as he comes into action. Mr. HODSON's method consists in piling together innumerable detached bits of narrative, description and comment, often only a couple of lines long, dwelling sometimes on illimitable heroism, sometimes on travellers' trivialities, and he likes to profess an air of wide-eyed innocence—as, for instance, when he agrees that perhaps a million times the height of one of the Pyramids would reach to the sun; but in spite of this apparently staggering gait he undoubtedly arrives. The real virtue of this volume rests in its power to speak out without betraying confidence, focusing attention on troubles freely reported by the fighting men he met that should be and can be speedily set right.

C. C. P.

Mixed Bag

Mr. DORNFORD YATES has dipped into a very mixed bag for the characters in the stories included in his new volume *Period Stuff* (WARD LOCK, 8/6). Tall, soldierly, self-restrained men, generally labouring under some drawback which prevents them from proposing marriage, and slim, sweet, lovely girls who are only longing to hear them do it, are in the majority, but there are solicitors (various), doctors, policemen, including the hard-working and sapient *Chief Inspector Falcon*, a Secret Service man, murderers, a horrid pair of cheats—in fact a grand collection of the sort of people whose doings and feelings make plots for magazine stories. Very ingenious are the murder mysteries and very charming the love stories, and there is one very dashing and exciting tale of an Englishman in Germany in great danger—since he was the Secret Service man—at the outbreak of war and his rescue through a delightful girl heroine and his own sang-froid. As a substitute for a visit to the pictures or an evening watching a musical comedy there could not be anything better. *Period Stuff* is the chocolate-cream of fiction, and very enjoyable in these rationed days.

B. E. S.

Simenon Again

We are lucky, so soon after *Affairs of Destiny*, to get another translation from the French of M. GEORGES SIMENON. It is a short novel dealing with the mental processes of a middle-aged Dutchman after he abandons his comfortable suburban home for a career of particularly unpleasant crime. Some will say it is a sordid little book, and indeed parts of it are not very pretty; but SIMENON writes with a detachment which makes us much less concerned with the details of *Poppinga's* aberrations than fascinated by the working of his mind once egomania has set in. A chess-player, he sees each move by the French police as one which he can confidently counter, and his defence lies in attack, in frivolous letters to the Paris papers and in foolhardy exhibitions of a face daily described to everyone in France. I am sorry to say that in many ways he is a likeable fellow. *The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By* (ROUTLEDGE, 7/6) is a crime study from a fresh point of view. It is also a tragi-comedy which could only have been written on the other side of the Channel.

E. O. D. K.



"Of course, my dear, I realized that the whole thing was frightfully illegal, but then I said to myself, 'After all, there is a war on.'"

The Traveller's Tale

YES, I went to see the Johnsons last week-end. It was just one of those impulses. . . . I got out the car, and drove off, wearing my new coat and my fur-lined boots, and taking lunch in a basket.

Just some cold chicken, chocolate biscuits, a slice or two of the Sunday iced cake, and my flask with some sherry in it. And bananas, of course. I always like bananas. Some people get tired of them, I believe.

There was a good deal of traffic, and I had nearly a hundred-and-fifty miles to go, so I only stopped once to buy a couple of boxes of sweets and some silk stockings to take to the Johnsons, and once for a meal.

No, it wasn't really very good. Just fried steak and onions and some gorgonzola cheese and biscuits and butter.

Of course I had to fill up the petrol-tank once or twice, and an ice-cream man tried to delay me while I was waiting, but one gets sick of ices.

Actually, I didn't get there till after dark, and there was the house—all ready to welcome me—light streaming from every window and the hall-door wide open.

The Johnsons were wonderful. He'd just been out shooting, and had a brace of pheasants and a hare, and she was wearing the most wonderful velvet frock with real Mechlin lace, that she told me had been a bargain. The boys were still out—they'd been invited to a great paper-chase—and the girl was looking at picture-papers in the hall. Such quantities of them and all so large and thick and shiny. I think she was cutting out some of the advertisements—face-creams and lip-sticks, and so on.

They'd just got new curtains and carpets—most attractive—and there were huge fires blazing everywhere. I must say I like a fire in a bedroom.

They'd just put in new lighting too. Quite a lot of it. The Old Masters in the dining-room showed up very well.

Can you understand people who sell their Old Masters? I never can.

I was so pleased to see the old family servants again. Of course the butler and the cook have been there longest, but Mrs. Johnson's own maid and the footmen, and even the pantry-boy, one's known for years and years. So nice, the way they stay on and on and on.

It was too late to go round the garden that night, but of course I did next day, and it was too lovely—nothing but flowers, and the grass so beautifully kept, and the lawns exactly like velvet.

Really, it all went on such oiled wheels that Mrs. Johnson doesn't feel she has enough to do, in spite of bridge and hunting and sherry-parties.

As for Mr. Johnson, he says he spends quite a lot of time corresponding with the income-tax people. It's quite amusing, and they write very pleasant, friendly letters, I believe, and it gives Mr. Johnson something to do.

Oh, yes, they had a magnificent wireless. (And while I think of it, they had hairpins and rubber hot-water bottles and dog-biscuits and matches and white elastic and oranges and pocket-combs and cameras and tennis-balls and peep-toe shoes, as well.)

We didn't really listen to the wireless much, except to get the weather reports.

E. M. D.

Saluting As It Shouldn't

VII

HERE are just two more types of Saluting As It Shouldn't, and then I have finished this series. First comes

THE SALUTE OBSEQUIOUS.

This is an extension of the Salute Courteous—insofar as a charred bit of meat may be said to be an extension of a well-cooked steak. In other words, overdone. Its main idea is to get yourself—whether private or junior officer—noticed; to draw the attention of the salutee to the fact that you're a pretty fine type, worthy of instant promotion. Excessive up-snapping of arms, quivering of wrists, and looking frankly and fearlessly into the other fellow's eyes distinguish this salute.

Don't overdo it, though: study your man. If he's a red-faced Colonel who looks as though he's had a bit of a thick night, sudden up-snappings of arms may break down his final vestige of control; a quivering wrist may be the last straw in a world already quivering pretty considerably. Or if he's a permanently nervous type—as distinct from temporarily nervy—that frank fearless gaze may only give him the impression that his tie is crooked and you're sneering at it. This doesn't help towards promotion—even less if he puts a tentative hand up towards his tie and finds that in fact it is crooked.

In short, the Salute Obsequious is really to be avoided and its giver despised. In spite of all illusions to the contrary, there's really no future in it—no future at all.

And finally there is

THE SALUTE QUITE INCREDIBLE.

Doubtless many forms of this are known to readers, but it only happened once in my experience. After all, it is the kind of salute that *can* only happen once in any one person's lifetime. The one I saw went like this:

A young infantry captain had just

come out of a tobacconist's with a box of cigarettes in his right hand and his stick and gloves in the other, when he encountered a private passing the adjoining shop, which was a butcher's. The private was on leave and taking his dog for a walk. . . . I should perhaps here point out that the Salute Quite Incredible demands a certain amount of stage-setting and props, but that's only to be expected. After all, you can't successfully put on, say, a play like *The Ghost Train* in the back drawing-room with a cast from the local kindergarten.

Well, the private took the dog-lead in the left hand and started to salute. The captain shoved the cigarettes hastily in his mackintosh pocket and prepared to acknowledge it. So far, all buttoned up and under control.

Unfortunately the private, in bringing his arm smartly up, hit his elbow an almighty whop on one of those long poles with a hook that hang on an iron rail outside butchers' shops and are used to garner in the more retiring joints from up in the back rows of the gallery.

The sudden noise of the impact—to say nothing of a virulent oath which does not usually accompany salutes—startled the officer so much that, missing his mackintosh pocket, he put the cigarettes instead right through the slit thoughtfully made to allow direct access from outside to tunic pockets. This, of course, meant that they went straight down inside his mackintosh on to the pavement.

The private, by then at the salute, had to cut it off short to check the dog, who thought the officer wanted a game of retrieving. Bending down to restrain him he was just in time to sustain a hasty attack to the base area from the pole, which, having swung away at the impact of his elbow, had now swung joyfully back into the fray.

This precipitated him forward into the captain, also bending down to grab his cigarettes before the dog did. Their heads met with a crack; the officer lost his stick and gloves, and the private his cap.

The captain, concentrating on essentials, picked up the cigarettes. The much-flustered private picked up the cap, one glove and the stick, gave the stick and cap to the captain and momentarily tried to put the glove on his head. The dog, having lost the cigarettes, picked up the other glove and started off down the street. He didn't get far because he'd by then got his lead round his master's leg. This brought him up all standing and the private all sitting. The butcher came out and said "What are you two playing at? . . ."

Well, I didn't wait to see any more, feeling that no one would ever believe what had happened so far. But it was a perfect example of the Salute Quite Incredible. The only other I have heard of which might be called this type was just an ordinary military salute. But it was given to a British Staff Officer by an Australian private. True, the Australian did first look round furtively in case any of his friends were watching him. The Staff Officer, of course, fainted. . . .

With that I'll leave this series, but if from time to time I come across any further examples of Saluting As It Shouldn't, I'll be delighted to share them with you.

A. A.

News from the Suburbs

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have been to sea again.

I am not boasting about this. It was purely a matter of duty. I could not have avoided it (I know, because I tried hard), and even whilst I was there I was not subjected to any greater risk or unpleasantness than those which sailors habitually have to face. But I still feel it was an event.

In fact, I went to the Faroes. A certain official, whom I may call X, as I think that makes it sound more exciting, was to visit them and he needed a companion, amanuensis, or what you will. I was the one selected. So I got out my Arctic equipment, my skis and ascorbic acid tablets and prepared for the worst.

The Faroes are that almost invisible little dot on the map, well above the top end of Scotland and slightly to the left. If their name wasn't printed in large type you might easily pass them by altogether. They belong to Denmark (the Danish Crown some time back picked up some assorted bargains in its dealings with Norway). They have always made a strong appeal to me since my journey back from Iceland, when for days they presented the only alternative to the glacier area of Iceland as a point to which to sail if we were torpedoed, and if we were lucky enough to get into any sort of craft that would actually sail one way or another. Ah, me! If only the Danes hadn't sold their West Indian colony I could get really excited over my next and third trip to Danish soil. (Or would that be challenging fate? Suppose we opened a Second Front in Denmark itself?)

But let me tell you about the trip. We started from a northern port in a

steamer very like the French railway wagons—"400 hommes 8 moutons," or however it used to run. We had a singularly uneventful journey, and by the time we were getting well to the north we ran into the kind of weather I remember so well in Iceland—high winds, driving rain and a general feeling that worse is to come but the climate wasn't designed for you, my lad.

When I say uneventful I mean it in a comparative sense. There was that moment when X nearly opened fire with a machine-gun on an innocent piece of wreckage, and the morning when he inspected the ship and changed his mind about being a good sailor. At the time they seemed to have both tension and climax.

But we arrived, to see quantities of heath-covered hills and the usual absence of anything that you can remember clearly afterwards. We landed at Tórshavn, which is rather a pleasant little town and the capital. It is in a small land-locked bay, the houses are very much more cheerful than those of Reykjavik, as seen from the sea—or at close quarters, for that matter—and generally there is a great deal of green about the landscape. Not that I care very much about landscapes. To my mind there is the landscape about Piccadilly Circus and there are other landscapes; but I know people do like landscapes, and for the benefit of those who intend to visit the Faroes or Iceland after the war I can

say definitely that the Faroes are much the greener of the two—in fact, quite as green as the Western Highlands. If they like the green of the Western Highlands they will like the Faroes. If they don't like the Western Highlands then they might as well not go beyond Manchester—if, indeed, they have any good reason for going so far.

We have now settled down to transact the business of our visit. Security demands that I say nothing about it, but you can well believe that a great deal of it consists of making notes of all the things that people there would like put right, assuming, not altogether correctly, that the War Office is both omnipotent and omniscient. And we are being very hospitably received by the troops.

There are troops there. Not that I can say much about them, because first, it is not the thing to go into troop details and so on just now, and secondly, they are very nice troops who seem very good at their job, very cheerful considering their location and undoubtedly very hospitable to their visitors. But they do like you to appreciate their island. Yesterday their colonel took X and myself to see the southernmost tip of the island. It was blowing a gale, there were the usual sheets of rain, mingled very intimately with the wind, and the track was one of the kind shown on maps as for people on foot and, in fact, practically unusable save by an amphibious chamois. And when we got

to the tip of the island it was, in confidence, very like the rest of the scenery—cliffs, a dirty sea, and a view mostly obliterated by rain, mist, and spray from the sea. We appreciated the island all right. It seemed just the place to hold a really good seven-day Army exercise. It may sound incredible, but it was immediately on our return that X made me play him at squash. X is remarkably keen on squash, and for some fantastic reason someone has built a squash court here.

I will say only this about squash. I have never liked billiards because I cannot work out visual angles except with the appropriate geometrical instruments. If it is imagined I can do it any better rushing madly about a concrete pen, striving in vain to catch a glimpse of the damned little ball, even when it is at rest, then lunacy knows no further heights. And fancy going to the Faroes to try that kind of folly again!

To change the subject, let us talk about the weather. This is as specified for the northern latitudes; rain and wind, or rain without wind, or wind without rain, and every fourteenth day two hours of sunshine just to remind you that there are other climates.

But there we are. Later I hope to tell you about the people and relate the cautionary tale about the wife of a Viking who did not believe her husband knew best.

Your loving Son HAROLD.



"As we shall probably be faded out before the end of the number, on behalf of the boys and myself, I wish you all good night."

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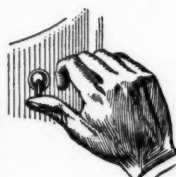
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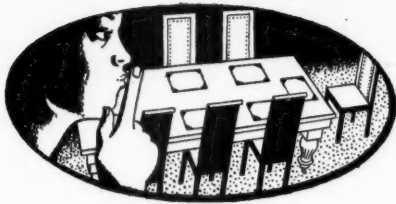
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Any doctor whose patients include a large number of war workers (yes, and housewives) must be distressed at the condition of their feet. Cases of *hallux valgus*, hammer toes, fallen arches and weak ankles are as numerous as the common cold. These ailments cause untold fatigue, loss of concentration and nervous exhaustion—and appreciably undermine the nation's work-power.

Yet what is the doctor to do? Hospitals are already overworked with ostensibly more serious cases. Treatment of common foot ailments is often a slow business, requiring special appliances. Arrangements for it are difficult for patient, doctor and hospital alike.

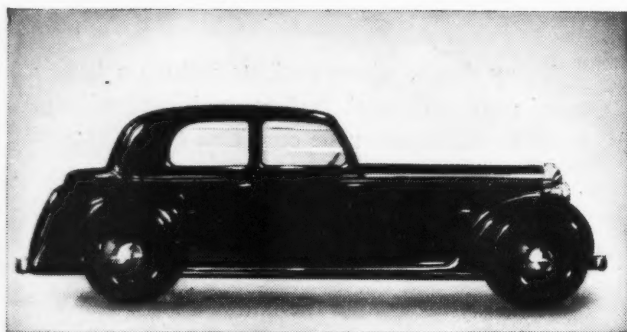
Until such time as the care of feet becomes a national concern, we would suggest that both industrial welfare services and private practitioners would find it a boon to make all possible use of the Scholl Organisation.

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Everybody knows that the man who does hard manual work and the child who is never still for a moment need more energy-producing foods than the man who sits all day in an office. Yet even the sedentary worker needs a diet of which half at least consists of carbohydrates, the energy-givers.

Obviously, then, the carbohydrates are important, especially for children. Fortunately they are cheap and so varied that any shortage in one group can be made up by substituting others in good supply.

Starch and sugars are the main carbohydrates. Starch is the chief constituent of flours and cereals. Potatoes, and the pulses such as peas and beans, are also rich in starch. Sugars are, of course, a problem to-day and it is best to save the syrup, honey, jam or chocolate for the children.

Fats are the other energy-makers. They give a reserve of energy while carbohydrates give quick energy. Fats are provided by lard, suet, dripping, butter, margarine and fat meat. Don't overlook the herring either; whether you eat him as bloater, kipper, or fresh herring, he's fine food for energy.

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